

### **This fact sheet will tell you about:**

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### **Current activities**

On December 3, 2009, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) signed a Unilateral Administrative Order (Order) for a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) for the Devil's Swamp Lake Site (Site). A Remedial Investigation is an evaluation of the nature and extent of contamination at the Site and the associated health and environmental risks. The Feasibility Study is an analysis of possible clean up technologies and is usually completed at the same time as the Remedial Investigation. The Order was issued to one of the Potentially Responsible Parties (PRP) for the Site. The Order is effective as of December 18, 2009.

### **What's next?**

The Order requires the PRP to evaluate existing Site information in the upcoming months and submit a draft work plan to conduct the investigation by mid summer 2010. EPA plans to conduct the next community meeting to discuss the planning for the RI/FS at that time.

### **Site history**

Devil's Swamp is in a large flood plain area which consists of Devil's Swamp Lake and areas immediately adjoining the lake. The Site is near Alsen, East Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana, about ten miles north of the City of Baton Rouge. The Devil's Swamp flood plain is a freshwater wetland covering approximately 12 square miles of land along the east side of the Mississippi River. Devil's Swamp Lake is characterized as a man-made lake, resulting from excavation of soil used as material for construction of levees around Baton Rouge Harbor in 1973.

The Clean Harbors Baton Rouge, LLC facility, formerly Rollins Environmental Services (LA) Inc. ("Rollins") is located northeast of the Baton Rouge Harbor and west of Scenic Highway. Rollins began operating a hazardous chemical disposal facility in 1971. Most of the landfill cells and receiving basins were below grade and used the natural clay soils for liners which was the practice at the time.

Elements and compounds defined as hazardous substances were found at the Site. The 1999 report, "Human Health Risk Assessment Devil's Swamp, Baton Rouge, Louisiana," stated that polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) had been found at levels of concern in sediments, fish and crawfish in Devil's Swamp Lake and areas southward to the Mississippi River. EPA's acceptable risk range for PCBs is exceeded in the Devil's Swamp Lake area, and these exceedences of cancer risks are due almost exclusively to the presence of PCBs in edible fish and crawfish tissues.

PCBs released into aquatic ecosystems also pose a number of potential risks to aquatic and terrestrial organisms. Similarly, exposure to sediment-associated PCBs can adversely affect the survival, growth, and reproduction of invertebrates and fish species.

In October 1987, the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals and the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries issued a fish-consumption advisory for Devil's Swamp Lake. The current advisory recommends that fish taken in the areas of Devil's Swamp, Devil's Swamp Lake, and Bayou Baton Rouge not be consumed more than two meals per month. The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals is attempting to notify all Louisiana residents of these advisories via fishing licenses, their website, and placement of the health advisory consultations in each of the library repositories across the state.

In March 2009, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality conducted fish advisory sign maintenance in the Devil's Swamp Lake area. They replaced missing or damaged signs.

### **Technical Assistance Grant**

A Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) provides money for activities that help your community participate in decision making at eligible or potential Superfund sites. An initial grant up to \$50,000 is available to qualified community groups so they can contract with independent technical advisors to interpret and help the community understand technical information about their site.

Only one TAG may be awarded for a site at any one time. Your community group is eligible for a TAG if your group may be affected by a release or a threatened release at any facility listed on, or proposed for listing under, the National Contingency Plan.

To be eligible for a grant, an applicant group must incorporate and must meet a 20 percent matching requirement, which may be in cash or donated services. If your group is interested in applying for this grant, or if you need additional information, please call 214.665.8157 or write to the EPA's TAG Coordinator, Beverly Negri at:

U.S. EPA Region 6 (6SF-VO)  
Dallas, Texas 75202  
Email: negri.beverly@epa.gov

### **Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry**

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) is part of the Public Health Service in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. ATSDR's mission is to prevent exposure and adverse human health effects and diminished quality of life associated with exposure to hazardous substances from waste sites, unplanned releases, and other sources. ATSDR works closely with the EPA and other federal, state, and local government agencies to protect human health.

In the "August 2006 Health Consultation", the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (LDHH), Section of Environmental Epidemiology and Toxicology (SEET) reviewed the data available on the previous fish sampling and came to the conclusion there is no danger to human health if the current fish consumption advisory is followed. However, based on historical data, if the advisory is not followed, a public health hazard could exist from the consumption of fish. SEET will analyze new fish data when it becomes available and present findings to the community in the form of a health consultation.

In November 2009, LDHH completed a Health Consultation on the Alsen Community water supply. The Alsen water comes primarily from the Scenic Highway and Jetson wells using the Layton well as a back-up source. Contamination concentrations detected in the three wells were below comparison values and it was determined the water posed no concerns for peoples' health and that no public health actions are needed at this time.

### **For more information**

To find out more about the Devil's Swamp Lake Site or the Superfund process, contact:

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**Information Repository**  
Scotlandville Branch Library  
7373 Scenic Highway  
Baton Rouge, LA 70807  
225.354.7540

All inquiries from the news media should be directed to the Region 6 Press Office at 214.665.2200.

You can find more information about the Region 6 Superfund program on EPA's Region 6 website:

<http://www.epa.gov/region6/superfund>

To have your address added to the Site mailing list call toll-free 800.533.3508.



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